

# *In Truth, Our Adoration Of God Is Not An Option!*

**PRACTICES NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THE SPIRITUAL LIFE** — From Brother Lawrence’s maxims concerning the practice of the awareness of the presence of God. The first four (of six) practices were given the past two weeks. If you missed these, they can be obtained either at the rectory office or by going online at: [www.stjohnthebaptistparish.net](http://www.stjohnthebaptistparish.net)

***Fifth:** All this adoration must be done in faith, believing that in truth God is in our hearts, that we must worship, love and serve Him in spirit and truth, and that He sees all that is happening or will happen in us and in all creatures. We must believe that He is altogether independent of everything and that He is the One on whom every worthy thing depends. He is infinitely perfect and is worthy by his infinite excellence and His sovereignty of all that we are and of all that is in Heaven and earth. We must believe that He can dispose according to His good pleasure in time and in eternity, and that we justly owe Him all our thoughts, our words and our actions. Let us see that we do it!*

This is difficult for humans to grasp. It goes contrary to what we find in society today where a life of independence is sought and desired above all else. To be your own person is to be self-sufficient, reliant on neither anything and anyone. But doesn’t this cause problems for us? Who is this person? In reality, no one! Only God can be this way.

No matter how materially or financially well off an individual is, that person is reliant on others, whether it be for clothing, fuel for energy, food, or the maintenance of the many cars owned. He is reliant on the workers employed to maintain his enterprises or his estate. To think otherwise is foolish. With a severe enough depression he could be the first seen in a bread line, incapable of producing his own food, and lacking the knowledge necessary for storing a harvest for the winter.

We are finite!

Our limited control pales in comparison to God who is not reliant on anyone or anything. God, who is infinite, has no need of anything we may offer. He

does not need us except perhaps to fulfill his dream for us — if it be his will. In his sharing, God desires that we attain that which is not of this world and all that is of the world as he desired it for all humankind, from the very beginning. It cannot be created or fashioned according to our own likeness. It has been done already in God’s likeness. This leaves only one step for us to take — joining with creation in humble adoration for the God who is greater than we can every possibly be.

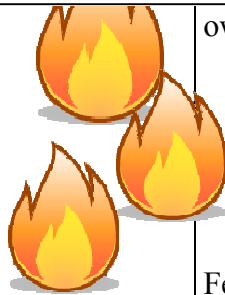


While remaining totally independent of us, God enters our lives, supplying us with grace — the strength of the Holy Spirit — that enables us to first, recognize all that is beyond our

## **GOD FIRST**

Year Two, Part 11

*The Prayer of Awareness*



own limitations and efforts, and then, second to see their value and to seek these above all else. **Our completeness of self is dependent on our working with God, not God working with us.**

In terms of the gifts of the Spirit, the gift of Wonder and Awe in the presence of God helps us understand this fifth teaching. Yes, it could be Fear of the Lord, in light of the power of God, but we adore God because he is totally other, yet has great care and concern for us. To “*justly owe him all our thoughts, our words and our actions*” is to enter into the reality of God’s presence with us always, and us entering into the work of God “doing” in perfection.

***Sixth:** We must study carefully 1) which virtues we need most, 2) those which are the most difficult to acquire, 3) the sins into which we often fall, and 4) the most frequent and inevitable occasions of our falls. We must run back to God with complete confidence when an occasion for spiritual warfare arises, remaining steadfast in the presence of His Divine majesty, humbly worshipping Him and presenting our miseries and afflictions to Him, and asking Him lovingly for the help of His grace. By doing this, in God we will discover all virtues without having any ourselves.*

Go back to the fifth practice for just one moment. If we are striving to become independent of

anyone or anything, one question will show us whether we really are independent, or moving to independence. “How much do I rely on plastic? You know, credit cards?” Now we can consider this sixth practice necessary for a spiritual life.



What are the virtues I maintain in my life? What are the charisms given to me as gift through the Holy Spirit? What are the virtues I lack or find most difficult to obtain? What do I do, or fail to do, with the charisms of the Spirit? Have I sought to understand, explore, and open up to these gifts? And, have I realized that nothing is mine, but all is truly gift?

What happens when we sin due to our lack of affirming the virtues of a holy life? What is left of me when these sins against these virtues occur over and over? Is there an escape?

In our spiritual development, returning to God, and the grace God provides for change in our lives, is the sole recourse. Since nothing is our own, and we seek that which is of God, only God can provide what is necessary for us to acquire these virtues. **God makes us virtuous sons and daughters.** To realize that we cannot change of our own accord, is critically essential. Anything less is only a joke.

**To turn to God, we must not expect that all will be well by saying, “God help me!” We must recognize who God is, acknowledge the infinite power of God, and continuously grow in our knowledge of the ability of God that calls us to a**

**new understanding — of how we must live. Most importantly, we must grow in accepting who we are in relationship to God.**

We finally humbly acknowledge that we possess no gifts, no abilities, no virtues, no charisms, absolutely nothing life-giving, of our own accord.

**When we do this, suddenly we become very happy, at peace!**

How is this? In God we find what is necessary — what we need — to accept our weaknesses and strengths, accept our sins. At the same time, we honor the gift from God that helps us overcome our own failings, our inability to conquer, our limitedness. But we also find the expanse of what God desires for us to know, to live, to share and to celebrate. We become, in a certain way, contemplatives that now can see the greater good for all people, as God sees.

These two teachings of Brother Lawrence help us come to grasp the full purpose of God in our lives — our dependency on God helps us accept God’s invitation to share his full life in accord with God’s plan. We don’t wish to be loners any longer, but now desire only what is perfect as found in God. Nothing else will do for us.

We pause to meditate on the reality that God’s presence in every moment of our lives is life-giving, very life-giving. It allows for peace and purpose. It calls us to a greater awareness of unity through the Holy Spirit.

Nothing else is necessary.



## **Our Humble Submission Is Our Only Hope**

*If you’ve been reading and understanding (within reason) these six practices necessary to gain a spiritual life, then you’re well on the way to capably understanding the contemplative prayer teachings of St. Teresa of Avila, and St. John of the Cross.*

*If you’ve noticed, that while we’ve been moving to a greater — almost constant — awareness of the presence of God, we’ve also been letting go of more and more individual ambitions. This brings the prayerful person to a realization that, when all is said and done, we really are nothing in comparison to God. And we, in our nothingness, humbly take that final step of opening up to the grace of God that moves us, fills us, strengthens us. Our union with God is completely dependent upon the love of God. It is in our nothingness that we realize God is offering us everything, and enabling us in ways never thought possible.*

*A humble submission to the life of the Lord God is an openness to change within the self. It is a growing awareness that many efforts we may make become hindrances to the grace that flows through us. We see how insignificant we are when left to our own thoughts and actions, yet how significant we are when we enter into the divine plan and life of our God. Created beauty is seen in the soul of that person who lives in humble acknowledgment of sin, of turning from these graces of life, and of God’s forgiveness. Humble submission is acknowledging and confessing our sinfulness, and at the very same moment, finding all that we were seeking — God’s presence — in ourselves.*